



Veteran

VOICES

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Vol. 1 Issue 6

December, 2000

Department of Veterans Affairs Plans for the Future

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs has unveiled a plan to address the needs – now and into the future – of *all* of the state’s veterans.

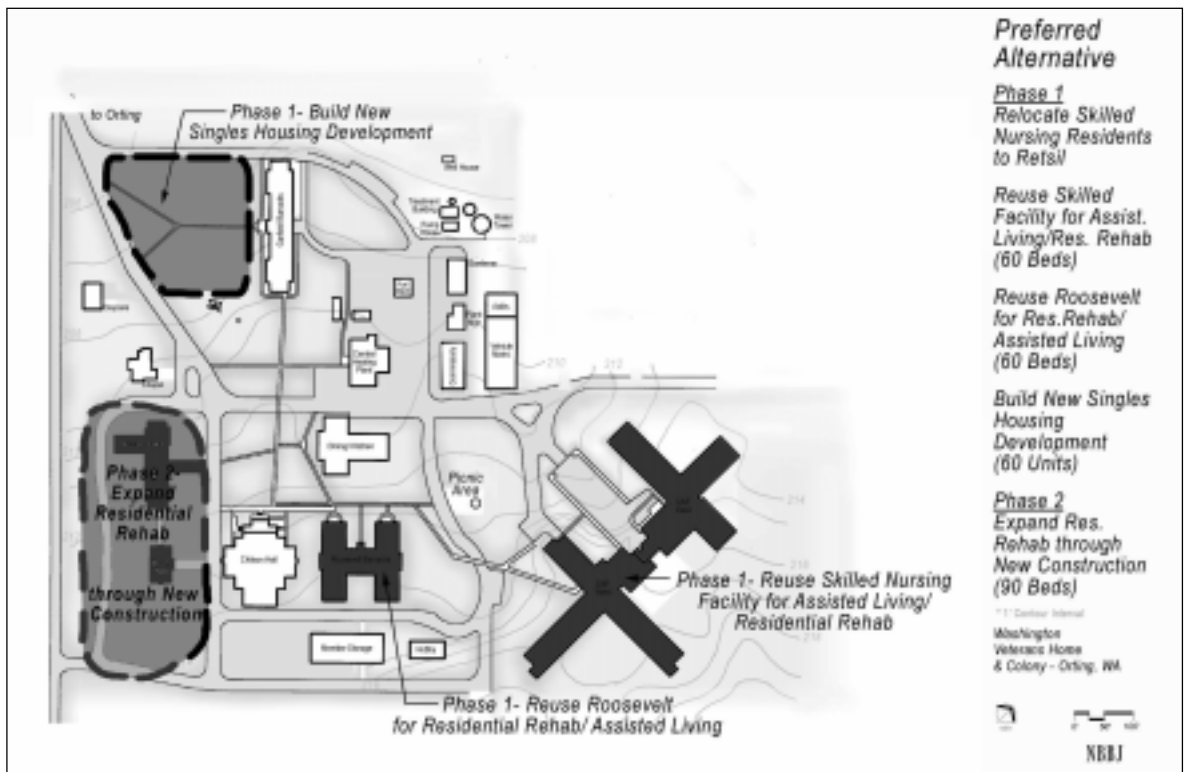
After years of study, testimony, meeting with lawmakers, and gathering of information and input from Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs), on Nov. 22, WDVA released its long-awaited Master Plan.

While the completion of the planning stage brings closure to one part of the process, WDVA Director John King admits this is only the start.

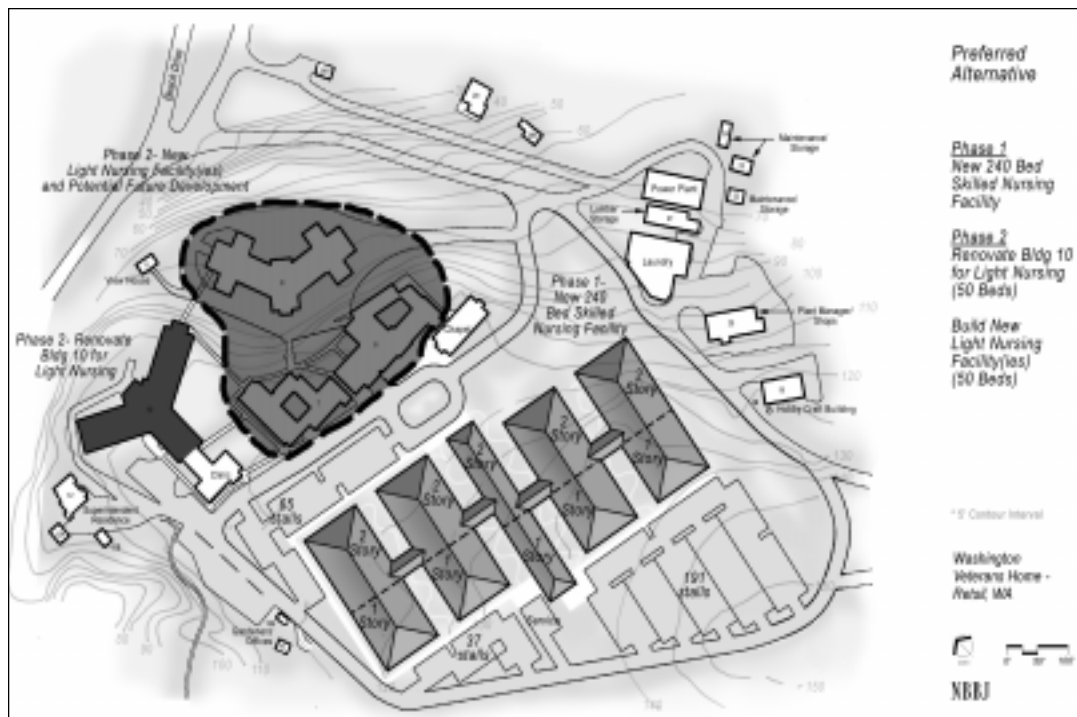
“Right now, this is still a concept – a plan,” said King. “Over the next several months, we will continue to gather comments and information from all interested parties in order to fine-tune this master plan. But right now, I believe this is a solid proposal that addresses the current and future needs of our veterans and I am extremely proud of the effort everybody put into this.

“This plan certainly deserves our full support.”

According to information gathered by the project consultants, NBBJ, there are currently 642,000 veterans living in Washington state. Over the next 20 years, the number of veterans aged 65 and over is



Orting - Preferred Alternative



Retsil - Preferred Alternative

expected to increase by 20,000; those 85 and over will increase by 226 percent; and the number of Vietnam-era veterans will comprise nearly 40 percent of the overall veteran population.

A 1998 Service Delivery & Capital Planning Feasibility Study found WDVA must invest in new nursing care facilities at the Washington Veterans Home at Retsil and the Washington Soldiers Home and Colony in Orting in order to meet earthquake standards and life-safety requirements. In response to this study, the Legislature gave the department several directives, including:

- Possible consolidation of the two state veterans homes operations;
- Assess alternatives for providing rehabilitative care to younger veterans; and
- Explore options to provide skilled nursing and assisted living in Eastern Washington.

See Future Plans on page 3

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Veteran Voices

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Veteran Voices is published for Washington State veterans and their family members, WDVA employees and Home residents.

Call 1-877-VETS-R-US (877-838-7787) for an application to either veterans home.

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John King, WDVA Director

A Plan for Now and the Future

The Washington Department of Veterans Affairs is entering the most important phase of its history since the original construction of the two Homes. It is our opportunity to adjust our services to fit the needs of veterans now and into the distant future.

This Master Plan (see cover story) proposes changing the mission of the Washington Veterans Home and Washington Soldiers Home and Colony, and addresses ways to serve veterans now and into the future, in Western and Eastern Washington.

By looking at the changing demographics of the state’s veteran population, it becomes obvious we must anticipate future needs and ultimately change the way we do business. The status quo will not allow us to honor the state’s commitment to provide the quality service to veterans and their families for the next 20, or more, years.

Change is difficult for our veterans, residents and staff. However, I am confident each member of this agency will continue to work to enhance services for staff and veterans, because, without exception, it has been each and every individual’s performance which has allowed WDVA to even be in a position to ask for approval of this plan. Your passionate, professional service to our veterans gives this agency the credit necessary to gain funding, especially during difficult times.

I want to thank the project consultants, NBBJ. They have worked above and beyond the call – on extremely tight deadlines – to gather information and work with the veterans community and the agency to design this plan. Our compassion – and passion – for serving veterans has infected them.

This Master Plan is now before the governor and his staff. If it meets his approval, it will go before the Legislature for funding. We are also preparing the request for Federal VA funding to be submitted in April, assuming the Legislature has approved the governor’s request.

Thank you all for your commitment and hard work, because the future looks bright.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

On Monday, January 15, 2001, our nation will honor the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. At the heart of Dr. King’s philosophy was the concept of service. He believed a person’s worth should not be measured by his or her color, culture, or class, but by his or her commitment to creating a better life for all.

I am requesting your assistance in making January 15 “a day on, not a day off” for state employees. In keeping with Dr. King’s mission, I am asking all state agencies to partner with my office in encouraging staff to celebrate the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday as a day of service. I have also asked business leaders, other elected officials and educators to join me in promoting this idea.

Thank you in advance for your participation. If you would like further information, please contact Ahndrea Blue of my staff at (360) 902-0652. I look forward to making next year’s celebration a memorable one.

Gary Locke, Governor

WDVA Strategic Goals

Improve the quality of care and services for veterans and their families.

Continue investing in staff, and provide the tools that result in high-quality services.

Maximize resources to honor the nation’s debt to veterans.

Review core processes to anticipate and influence future needs.

Did You Know?

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is the second largest Federal agency, second only to the Department of Defense.

Survey Says....

Thank you to those who responded to the Publications Survey in the September edition of Veterans Voices. While survey responses are still coming in, your input is already paving the way for WDVA – and especially the Communications Department – to more effectively communicate to agency staff, residents and members of the veterans community.

One change based on survey results? The Washington Veterans Home and Washington Soldiers Home and Colony will *not* have separate newsletters. Beginning in Feb. 2001, staff and residents at the Homes will receive a joint newsletter containing individual sections for activities and items of interest at each home. The joint Homes newsletter will be an important communications tool for residents and staff. It will provide quicker, more timely information than the Veteran Voices. And if you're not a resident at one of the homes or



Jim Guthrie
Communications
Director

WDVA employee, you can certainly receive a copy as well. Simply contact the Media and Community Relations Department – Colleen Gilbert at 360-725-2180 – and we'll place your name on the mailing list.

Again, thank you for your responses. Many of the suggested article ideas and improvements will be in upcoming editions of the Veteran Voices.

I would also like to welcome Heidi Audette as WDVA's new Legislative Liaison.

Heidi brings several years of experience from the state House of Representatives, most recently as an analyst on education, and children and family services issues.

She will be responsible for tracking legislation that will directly impact veterans and the department. She will also be keeping tabs on other major bills as they move through the legislative process and will provide legislative expertise to the Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC) and the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC).

In addition to her state legislative duties, Heidi will be the main contact for constituent referrals to the agency, as well as events in Washington D.C.

Her contact information is on the following page. Please join me in welcoming her to the WDVA.

OTHER SURVEY RESULTS

Of those who responded:

Community Veteran	52 percent
State and/or WDVA employee	18 percent
Federal employee	7 percent
Residents	7 percent
Other	15 percent

- 93 percent of respondents said the content was somewhat or very informative.
- 100 percent said the pages were easy to follow.
- 96 percent said the type was easy to read.

Some of the items respondents would like to see covered more extensively:

- Benefits, support groups, the claims process, what counties are doing for veterans and the impacts of state and federal legislation (and more).

Future Plans continued

In response to these legislative mandates, and to meet the needs of the changing veteran population, the missions of the state veterans homes at Orting and Retsil will be changed:

- ▶ Long-term care will be consolidated at Washington Veterans Home at Retsil by building a new, 240-bed skilled nursing facility to replace current skilled beds at Retsil and Orting.
- ▶ The Washington Soldiers Home and Colony at Orting will be converted to a comprehensive, short-term rehabilitation facility serving younger, mostly homeless veterans. The program will provide health and mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment, and employment and life skills training programs. The campus will serve up to 210 veterans at any one time, with an average length of stay of four to six months.

In addition to redefining the mission of the two veterans homes, the master plan addresses a glaring need for long-term care for veterans in Eastern Washington.

"We are currently discussing the establishment of an Eastern Washington State Veterans Home," said King, "but not actually building a new facility. We understand it simply wouldn't be feasible – or cost-effective – to use bricks and mortar to solve the urgent need in Eastern Washington."

King said the department is exploring the possibilities of the

state operating a federally owned facility, state operation of an existing state-owned facility to be adapted to use as a state veterans home, or state ownership and operation of an existing community nursing home or homes in Eastern Washington.

NBBJ estimates the capital cost of the new skilled nursing facility at Retsil is \$47.3 million and if the Federal VA provides an expected 65 percent match, the state will be responsible for \$16 million of that amount.

King cautiously estimates the first shovel of dirt may be turned over at Retsil in approximately two to three years, and completion of the new facility will be anywhere from five to eight years. The comprehensive rehabilitation program at Orting will be initiated in mid-2001 and establishment of an Eastern Washington Home is already under discussion.

King said the department's master plan is currently before Governor Locke awaiting his decision. He said if the governor approves of the plan, the state portion of funding will be requested during the 2001 legislative session (Jan.-April). If state funding is approved, work will begin on obtaining the 65 percent federal match. Under the best scenario, King believes full approval of funding is not expected until late 2001.

"We have support from the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC), the Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC), the Legislative Joint Select Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs and all the major VSOs in the state," said King. "It's a viable plan and I can't wait for the next step in the process."



Heidi Audette
Legislative Liaison

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Greetings! Having recently assumed the duties of the WDVA Legislative Liaison, I look forward to providing you updates on a wide range of issues before your federal and state-elected representatives. I come to the department after working several years in the Washington State House of Representatives.

The state House will remain a 49 – 49 tie for the next two years. The state Senate is also closely balanced with a 25-24 Democratic majority. In the 2001 legislative session, legislation will have to pass close scrutiny from both parties before having a chance of making it onto Governor Locke’s desk.

The department’s master plan (see cover story) will have to go through the state’s Capital Budget process. Information will be provided on this bill – and the bill number – as it becomes available.

The first day for a bill to be “dropped” in the state Legislature is Dec. 19. However, until session starts on Jan. 8, 2001, additional details on the status of bills will be unavailable.

Similar to the state balance of power, there are slim majorities in both chambers of Congress. Consequently, in order for any federal legislation to be successful, it will need strong bipartisan approval.

Again, I’m happy to be on board. My husband served in the U.S. Army, his father is a Vietnam veteran and his grandfathers both served in WWII, so I understand the importance and value of the veterans community. Any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at 360-725-2154.

VETERANS BENEFITS - Federal

HR 4864 – Veterans Claims Assistance Act of 2000, has been designated Public Law 106-475. (Signed into law Nov. 9, 2000.)

- Defines VBA’s duty to assist claimants who file substantially complete claims for VA benefits.
- Requires the VBA to examine veterans or obtain a medical opinion if necessary to make a decision on a claim for compensation.
- Regulations are being developed, by Compensation and Pension Service, to implement this new law.

(SOURCE: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs)

Armed Forced Veterans Homes Foundation

The Foundation, made up of America’s Veterans Service Organizations, unanimously decided to begin a national fundraising effort to enhance the quality of life for all veterans residing in state and national veterans homes.

Originally the group focused on the two National Armed Forces Retirement Homes. The focus has now been expanded to include more than 100 state veterans homes. It is the goal of the Foundation that the additional funding they provide will offer veterans access to items not allowed for in current budgets. (For more information, visit www.VetHomesFoundation.org)

Expanded Benefits for Filipino Veterans

Two bills have recently been signed into law affecting Filipino veterans residing in the United States who fought alongside American troops during WWII.

- The “**Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000**” contains provisions extending eligibility for future burial in VA national cemeteries to certain WWII veterans of the Philippine Commonwealth Army and recognized guerilla groups living in the United States.
- **HR 4635** contains provisions improving Filipino veterans benefits. This has been designated Public Law 106-377 and will offer certain Filipino veterans hospital and nursing home care and medical services in the same manner as a veteran. It also authorizes medical services to veterans with service-connected disabilities within the limits of an outpatient clinic in the Philippines. Such services are provided unther the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(SOURCE: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release)

Agent Orange – Diabetes Screening

Acting Secretary Hershel Gober announced on Nov. 9, 2000 that Vietnam veterans with Type-II diabetes will now be eligible for disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs based on their presumed exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides. With this announcement, the Federal VA will begin developing rules for implementing changes in benefits. This process will likely take several months to complete.

Vietnam veterans with diabetes can immediately begin accessing health care through the Federal VA. The department also encouraged all veterans who served in Vietnam to be screened for diabetes. It is estimated that more than one-third of adults who have diabetes have not been diagnosed.

(SOURCE: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs News Release)

STATE – Definition of a Veteran

Legislation is being drafted by the Veterans Legislative Coalition in an attempt to update the state’s definition of a veteran. The expanded definition would impact access to:

- Credit for military service for non-retirees enrolled in PERS I or LEOFF I.
- License plates for disabled veterans.
- Scoring criteria in competitive examinations to determine qualifications of applicants for public employment.
- Veterans Assistance Funds.
- Re-employment of returned veterans.

(Contact Dennis Primoli with the VLC at 253-445-1645 for more information.)

STATE – Legislative Committee on Economic Development

This committee focused their November meeting on the impact of Department of Defense jobs on the Washington economy. The committee was briefed at Ft. Lewis on the \$8 billion impact military bases have on Washington communities. Some community leaders hope the state will take a stronger role in protecting and attracting military/industrial jobs in Washington. Thus far, the committee has focused on information gathering and goal setting. They will review issues for possible legislation during their December meeting.

Administrative Services Manager



Donna Grazzini
Administrative Services
Manager

With WDVA’s April, 2000 executive-level re-organization, the previous position of Human Resource (HR) Manager became the Administrative Services Manager. As the Administrative Services Manager, my department is responsible for HR, Records Management, Policy, Rules and Regulatory Reform, Contracts Oversight, Legal Liaison, Risk Management, Training, Employee Recognition and Safety. There are seven staff dedicated to performing these functions agency-wide:

- At the Veterans Home:** Debby Griswold, Human Resource Consultant
Liz Berens, HRCA
- At the Soldiers Home:** Gary Klein, Human Resource Consultant
Norma Urquhart, HRCA
- At the Central Office:** Evelyn Harris, Human Resource Consultant
Oscar Green, Safety Officer
Susan Ramsey, Policy and Rules

Human Resources

The WDVA employee survey was conducted from Nov. 27th through Dec. 15th. The responses will provide information on what the agency is doing right and where improvements can be made. The survey results will be shared when Department of Personnel makes them available.

The Veterans Benefit Class study continues and I would like to thank each person who participated in the desk audits. Their input regarding job responsibilities is very important and gives the process integrity and value. *For all your help, thank-you!*

Safety

Oscar Green is WDVA’s Safety Officer. The safety program oversees claims management, emergency management, ergonomics and overall safety of our facilities. Oscar is recruiting for safety committee members and by union contract, employees must be elected to the committee.

The Safety Office has been placing emphasis on pro-active prevention, including conducting ergonomic assessments of work areas. These assessments review awkward postures possibly caused by improper location of office equipment, repetitive

motions, lifting, carrying, heavy, turning or transferring of residents. If you would like a workstation consultation, or if you have suggestions to prevent accidents in your area, please contact Oscar at 360-725-2175.

Policy/Rules

Susan Ramsey is WDVA’s policy/rule coordinator. Pat Sams – Soldiers Home, Gary Condra – Soldiers Home, Jim Brown – Veterans Home, Barbara Culley – Veterans Home, April Harris – Central Office and Sharon Lindley – Veterans Services make up the Policy Committee.

The Policy Committee meets every other month to review and update policies as needed. For your review, each department head at the homes has a policy/procedure manual with updated policies/procedures. The committee members working in the Central Office have a manual as well. The manuals are available at these locations until the agency’s policies/procedures are posted on the Intranet (in the near future).

Training

HR is responsible for the oversight of training activities for WDVA. Ed Dolle is the Staff Development Coordinator for the Veterans Home, and Karen Bryan is the Staff Development Coordinator for the Soldiers Home. Richard Stewart, Ed Dolle, Karen Bryan, Evelyn Harris and Susan Ramsey make up the WDVA training action team and Donna Grazzini is the sponsor. This group has been developing a Human Resource Development Plan for the agency – including individual training plans for all staff. The Respectful Workplace Training plan for the entire agency is being finalized and will be implemented by the summer of 2001. It is currently being offered at New Employee Orientation.

I invite you to stop and review all of the great accomplishments of the staff I mentioned. In our hectic lives, we don’t often take time to assess the situations – or the people – who make our workplace a better place to work. We want to do a good job. And more than anything, we want to make a difference. Please, take time to ask questions and let us help you make a difference!

The Washington State DCP just got better

Now participants can access their Deferred Compensation Program (DCP) accounts and make changes themselves on a daily basis. These transactions include transferring investments between funds, changing monthly deferral amounts and changing investment allocations.

More than 40,000 state and other public employees have almost \$2 billion invested in their DCP accounts.

Financial consultants say you need three components to have a successful retirement: your pension, your social security benefits and your investments.

A comment heard regularly at Department of Retirement Systems retirement planning seminars is: “I wish I had started saving earlier.” Currently, 38

percent of state employees take advantage of their DCP benefit.

Many people don’t realize the key to building a secure future is not the amount of money saved each month, but how early that saving starts. This is due to the magic of compounding. The longer the period of time, the more compounding will increase the savings.

The most common excuse for not saving is “I can’t afford to save now - I’ll start later and catch up.” That doesn’t work and here is why. Someone saving \$100 a month for 30 years will end up with more in their account than someone who starts 10 years later and invests \$200 a month for 20 years. The person who started earlier and saved \$100 a month for 30 years would have \$150,029 based upon an 8 percent annual yield. The employee

who started 10 years later and contributed \$200 a month will only have \$118,590.

There is no better way to save for your future than through the Washington State Deferred Compensation Program. You immediately reduce your taxes and your investments are tax deferred during your career. Because DCP has some of the lowest fees in the industry, more of your money is working for you — rather than going to administrative and management investment fees.

The bottom line - **start to save now**. You will be amazed how fast your account grows.

For more information about DCP, visit the DCP Web site at: <http://dcp.ssga.com/> or call DCP at 1-888-327-5596.

First VCSCs on the job in Central Washington

Lonnie James and Gene Foley have been hired as Veterans Community Services Coordinators (VCSCs) to provide veteran volunteers with guidance in providing services to fellow veterans in Eastern Washington. These positions are an important element in the restructuring of Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs' (WDVA) field service operations in Central Washington. The change is in response to the growing veteran population in our state and the need to find a better way to provide service to more veterans in a more efficient way.



Lonnie James

James, a native of Wapato, is a Vietnam Veteran who spent 1968 through 1971 in the U.S. Army as an M.P. While in Vietnam, his duties took him on convoy escorts, river patrol and into Provost Marshall investigations. However, the job he talks about is the one performed at the age of 19 when he and his partner delivered the baby of a Vietnamese woman who went into labor on their watch.

"What else could we do?" said James.

After discharged from the Army, he spent the next 25 years in law enforcement, retiring in 1995. James came out of retirement to manage the Yakima Disabled American Veterans (DAV) office before accepting the current position of VCSC. James credits his background handling public relations for the Yakima Police Department with helping him to set goals and focus on what needs to be done to succeed in his new position.

"Everyday that goes by, I am getting more phone calls from

veterans asking for help with filing simple to complex paperwork," said James. "Recently, I handled six claims at the VFW on a Saturday morning, so the word is getting out and I am definitely getting referrals.

"The best part is, I get to walk away and know I've helped someone – I've made a difference," concluded James.

(James can be reached at (509) 457-2151 or e-mail him at LonnieJ@DVA.WA.GOV)

Gene Foley, a resident of Walla Walla for the past 41 years, was part of the U.S. Army's 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment from 1953-1955.

"I was one of the really lucky ones," said Foley. "My unit was never deployed and we 'guarded the gold at Fort Knox.'"

After his discharge from the Army, he spent time in Roseburg, Ore., working in his family's insurance business before moving to Walla Walla in 1959, where Foley's great-great grandfather was the commanding officer at Fort Walla Walla in 1860. "It was like coming back to my old home town, moving here," he said.



Gene Foley

Foley — a volunteer with the American Legion for the last 30 years — has spent his whole life providing customer service, both in his career and his free time. He believes his ability to talk to anyone, and feel comfortable with everyone, will help him

succeed at his new endeavor. His biggest challenge? "Getting the local service officers trained to help the other veterans in the communities," he said. "In the past, there has been a slight misconception about what being a post or chapter service officer meant, and there has not always been qualified, timely training available to them.

"My job is to help change all that and the six counties I'll be covering are going to keep me really busy," added Foley.

(Foley can be reached at (509) 525-5200 ext. 22240 or E-mail at geneutta@bmi.net)

39 Veteran Volunteers receive training in Yakima

Thirty-nine veteran volunteers from across the state participated in a National Service Officer Accreditation Course in Yakima Oct. 2 - 6.

The training – provided by the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) National office based in Washington, D.C. – was sponsored by the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) in partnership with the VVA.

"Our entire budget has been thrown into training," said Jimmy Grissom, State Council President of VVA. "This is the first time we've done this type of training on the West Coast. The knowledge everyone walked away with is essential if we are to be successful in reaching out to the veterans in our communities."

The training session focused on the technical and legal aspects of assisting veterans and family members in accessing Federal VA entitlements. The instructors, attorneys from Washington, D.C., took the participants through a claim – starting when a veteran first contacts them – and ending when the claim has been settled to the satisfaction of all parties.



Earlier this year, WDVA launched a pilot program on the Olympic Peninsula and Central Washington directed at bringing better, more comprehensive services to veterans in those areas. A key element to the success of the program is training veteran volunteers to expand service to veterans in communities currently not being reached.

To further supplement the program, Veterans Community Services Coordinators have been charged with the overall responsibility of linking veterans with the services they need.

Lonnie James, newly appointed to that position for Central Washington, and Gene Foley, newly appointed as VCSC for the Walla Walla area, attended the training, providing an opportunity for the group to develop a sense of team camaraderie.

Other participants included federal, state and county employees who were joined by representatives from the National Association for Black Veterans, Native American Tribal Veterans Representatives and a number of advocates from several Veterans Service Organizations including VVA, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

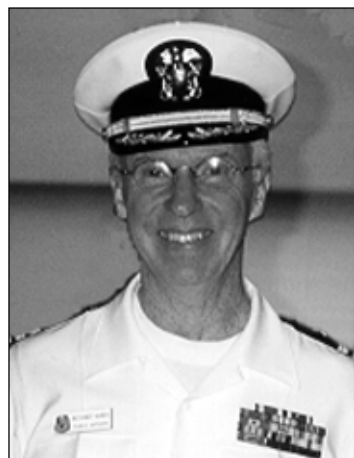
All 39 participants successfully completed the training.



Governor appoints new members to VAAC



Brownie Braunsteiner



Richard Marin

Brownie Braunsteiner and Richard L. Marin have been appointed by Governor Locke to serve on the Governor’s Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) for the next four years.

Braunsteiner — a U.S. Army veteran of World War II, Korea and Vietnam — represents the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

Marin, who served in the U.S. Navy in Vietnam, and later as a Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, has been appointed as a veteran at large.

Two members — Fran Agnes representing the American Ex-Prisoners of War, and Oria Berndt, who represents the Non-Commissioned Officers Association — have each been re-appointed to serve another four-year term. Berndt is the newly elected Chairman for the VAAC.

Additionally, Ronald Springer has been appointed to fill the position left by Dick Zimmerman, who passed away earlier this year. Springer, representing the Merchant Marine veterans, has been in the position on a temporary basis awaiting permanent appointment.

Other members of the VAAC are: Richard Kirk — member at large, Charles Karczewski — Paralyzed Veterans of America; Dr. Francisco Ivarra — American GI Forum; George Bodah — Washington Soldiers Home and Colony; George Edmundson — Vietnam Veterans of America; Jim Ducker — Washington Veterans Home; Keith Sherman — The Retired Officers Association; Michele Vickery — Disabled American Veterans; Raymond Miller — Association of Black Veterans; Robert Harcum — Military Order of the Purple Heart; David Guzman — Nat’l Association of Veteran Program Administrators; and Robert Westphal — American Legion.

The VAAC is a seventeen-member committee that serves in an advisory capacity to the governor and the director of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) on matters pertaining to WDVA. (RCW 43.60A.080.)

For more information on the VAAC and its meetings, please contact Oria Berndt at (253) 535-5656 or Cyndee Baugh at (360) 725-2153.



Massing of the Colors

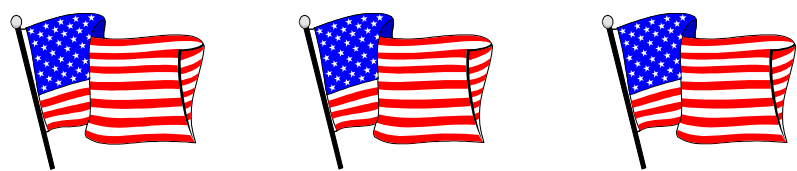
Your organization is invited to participate in the 2001 MASSING OF THE COLORS CEREMONY, at 3:00 P.M., Feb. 11, 2001, at the Soldiers’ Field House, Ft. Lewis, WA.

MASSING OF THE COLORS is a patriotic ceremony honoring those who have served the United States of America, and the Youth of Today who will carry forth in the future.

- ★ American Flags and organizational colors or banners of veteran, fraternal, civic, youth and other patriotic organizations are marched into the assembly hall and massed in formation to honor our Country and its Flag.
- ★ Patriotic music is featured.
- ★ Veterans are remembered, beginning with the Nation’s foremost veteran, President George Washington.
- ★ I Corps Band provides music.
- ★ The public is invited.

Plan now to include your unit at this annual event.

Invitations to your organization will be mailed prior to Christmas. For additional information, contact Colonel Carroll Dickson USA (ret.) at (253) 564-7434 or email at carrollz@prodigy.net.



President Signs \$310 Billion Defense Bill

WASHINGTON - President Clinton signed into law a \$310 billion defense bill that provides an array of upgrades in living standards for active-duty military personnel and enhanced health care benefits for veterans.

The new law expands TRICARE, the HMO-like military health care plan, to provide lifetime benefits for 20-year career retirees and their dependents. Currently, TRICARE coverage ends for veterans when they become eligible for Medicare. Under the plan, to go into effect in October 2001, beneficiaries would not have any co-payments or deductibles. Veterans will also have better access to prescription drugs. All 1.4 million Medicare-eligible military retirees and family members are now eligible for reduced-cost prescription drugs.

The bill also expands the Pentagon’s mail order and network retail pharmacy programs to include those over age 64. Military retirees over 64 can use out-of-network pharmacies with payment of a deductible of \$150 a year.

The defense bill also includes a 3.7 percent pay raise for active-duty service members, and a subsistence payment of up to \$500 per month for the more than 5,100 military families who receive food stamps. It also provides funds to reduce out-of-pocket housing costs, and \$900 million to build and improve military family housing.

The Floyd D. Spence National Defense Authorization Act – named for the chair of the House Armed Services Committee – was \$4.5 billion more than the president requested and \$12.6 billion above fiscal 2000 spending.

(There will be more detailed information on this legislation in the March issue of the Veteran Voices.)



Merle Woodside received his medal from **Jerry Towne, Orting Superintendent.**



Wallace West



Mike Marquie



Chas. Carter

Veterans Homes Honor Veterans

ORTING — Veterans of the Washington Soldiers Home and Colony were the guests of honor as Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, church youth groups and an array of community members paid tribute to our nation's heroes on Nov. 11 at Chilson Hall in Orting.

The Puyallup Community Band, under the direction of Rush Ward, was at its best as they accompanied the McChord AFB 62nd Airlift Wing Color Guard during posting and retrieval of colors. Veterans stood proudly as the band paid tribute to all military branches of service by playing their service anthems.

Korean War Veterans were presented with the Republic of Korea War Service medal and a certificate of appreciation from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA).

John E. Lee — Deputy Director of WDVA — delivered the keynote address, reminding all present to take the time to thank our veterans for our freedom.

The afternoon concluded with the dedication and unveiling of a chainsaw sculptor created by Bob King. The resident council and various Veteran Service Organizations raised the money needed to turn what remained of a tree behind Roosevelt Barracks into a work of art.



A chainsaw sculpture created by Bob King was unveiled.



The McChord 62nd Airlift Wing Color Guard posted the colors.

Outstanding Service

A Special Award of Merit was presented to the Walla Walla County Veterans Relief Advisory Committee for their outstanding service to veterans and their families. This marks only the second time the award has been presented to a group.



Walla Walla County Veterans Relief Advisory Committee

Committee members include Walla Walla AMVETS Post Mel Harnett, Commander Gene Braden, Member at Large Jim Irwin, Post Service Officer

College Place VFW Post 40 Ken Silver, Commander Tom Fry, Member at Large Ron Williams, Post Service Officer

College Place Korean War Association Chapter 196

On Veterans Day, several Washington residents were honored as they received Outstanding Service to Veterans Awards for their contributions to Washington state's veterans and their families during the last year.



John Kenny (right) accepts his award from VAAC member Fran Agnes.

The awards — co-sponsored each year by the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee (VAAC) and the state Department of Veterans Affairs — recognize individuals

who devote time and energy to improving the lives of Washington's veteran community.

John Kenny, of Bellevue, was selected Outstanding Veteran Volunteer. Kenny served in the U.S. Army during World War II and is a life member of the Veterans of Foreign War (VFW). He also spent seven years as the Federal Legislative Chairman for the state VFW. Kenny currently serves as the Public Affairs Officer for VFW Post 2995.

Sharon Williams, of Mill Creek, was honored as the Outstanding Service Officer. Williams served in the U.S. Army

from 1974 to 1977 and has been a service officer with the American Legion for the past five years. She worked with the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Disabled American Veterans to create a training program designed to emphasize the coordination of service organizations in providing service to the veterans of Washington state.



Sharon Williams

Skip Dreds, of Burien, was recognized as the Outstanding

Employee. Dreds is the Government Relations Director of the Northwest Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). After serving nearly 10 years in the U.S. Army, he joined the PVA in 1984 and is most proud of the passage of the Washington State's Disabled Opportunities



Skip Dreds

Day 2000



Donald Reynvaan received his medal from Alfie Alvarado-Ramos.



James Morgan

RETSIL - The Washington Veterans Home's Veterans Day program also included a special tribute to residents who are Korean War Veterans eligible to receive the Republic of Korea War Service Medal. The Republic of Korea originally offered the medals in 1951, but U.S. law prohibited U.S. military personnel from wearing medals issued by foreign governments. In Aug. 1999, the Department of Defense approved the acceptance and wearing of the Republic of Korea medal.

Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Director Alfie Alvarado-Ramos presented the medals to veterans.

"It is a great honor for us to be a part of this presentation," said Alvarado-Ramos. "Not only is this a much-deserved recognition of what our Korean War veterans endured 50 years ago, but it is a most appropriate day to recognize and say 'Thank you' to all veterans.

We owe them a great debt — not just as a nation — but as a community and as individuals."

Other highlights during the program included Oria Berndt, chairman of the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee as keynote speaker, musical performance by the Stars and Stripes young peoples group, the Navy Band Quartet and the Kitsap County Veterans Coalition naming the annual Veterans Day Queen, the Male, Female and Home resident Veterans of the Year award recipients.



Carl Mazza



Frances Blackerby named Resident of the Year.

Awards Presented

Dale McLain, President
Waitsburg American Legion Post 35
Walter Harris, Commander
Ivan Keve, Member At Large
W.D. Hall, Post Service Officer

Waitsburg VFW Post 7021
J.E. Hazelbaker, Commander
Delbert Mock, Member At Large
Frank Brown, Post Service Officer

Walla Walla American Legion Post 32
Billy Patterson, Commander
Ron Fry, Member at Large
Gene Foley, Post Service Officer
Walla Walla VFW Post 992
Wayne Ireland, Commander Dist. 10 Rep

Buzz Logan
Bill Stevens, Member At Large
Jerry Manuel, Post Service Officer

Veterans Administration Hospital Rep
Chris Oliver

Helpline
Sister Mary Becker, Executive
Director, United Way

Department of Human Services
Margaret Schact, Director
Teri Johnson, Admin. Assistant
Cindy Widmer, Human Services
Manager



Daniel Campos



Carman Stevens named the 2000 Veterans Day Queen.



Sylvia Cruz

Employment Act during last year's legislative session.

Sylvia Cruz, of Yakima, was presented the 2000 Outstanding Female Non-Veteran award. Cruz began her work with veterans in 1991 through the Yakima Valley on-the-job training program. Two years ago, she became a service officer for the Disabled American Veterans and the only thing she takes more seriously than her job helping veterans, is her two sons

and her husband.

Representative Kathy Haigh, D-Shelton, was honored as Outstanding Legislator. Haigh is a member of the Joint Select Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs, serves as the vice-chair of the House Education Committee and is a



Rep. Kathy Haigh

strong advocate for veterans.

Senator Marilyn Rasmussen, D-Eatonville, was also honored as Outstanding Legislator for 2000. Rasmussen serves as the chairwoman of the Joint Select Committee on

Veterans and Military Affairs. Her strong advocacy of veterans is recognized throughout southern Pierce County.

Jimmy Grissom of Moses Lake was honored as the Outstanding Volunteer Service Officer for 2000. Grissom is a Vietnam Veteran who is currently serving as the state's Vietnam Veterans of America Council President. His many hours as a volunteer service officer have benefited countless veterans around the state, and he is now passing on his experience to other service officers through statewide training sessions.

The honorees were recognized during the annual Veterans Day Parade in Auburn on Nov. 11, and received their awards at a luncheon at the Auburn Elks Lodge later that day.



Sen. Marilyn Rasmussen

❖ Soldiers Home Highlights

Sculptor's Materials Donated to Soldiers Home

The creativity of deceased sculptor Giovanni Schoeman has been passed on to the Soldiers Home and Colony in the form of his last remaining molds and materials.

The Lakewood Art Guild Multi-Cultural Association donated the artist's last 37 usable molds and 450 pounds of metal grains to be used by residents to create replicas of Schoeman's work.

Guild President Francoise Dubrulle has promised to recruit volunteers to train staff in the technique of cold-casting sculpture, a process invented by Schoeman. The staff will, in turn, be able to teach the residents, who will be able to produce replicas of the artist's designs.

As a young man, Schoeman immigrated to the United States from South Africa and was befriended by Evelyn Rush, a Fine Arts student in California. Rush and Shoeman became business partners until Schoeman died at the age of 45. His molds and materials have been stored in Rush's Lakewood garage for the last 10 years.

Upon Rush's recent death, her daughter, Susan Hart, donated this priceless collection of materials to the Lakewood Art Guild,



(L to R) Mr. Hart, Francoise Dubrulle, Susan Hart and Lynn Zemke look over the molds donated to the Soldiers Home by the Lakewood Art Guild.

relying on her mother's long time friend, Dubrulle, to find a fitting use for the molds and metals.

Dubrulle thought it would be an easy task to donate to a local school, but after being turned down by five different institutions due to non-compatible curriculums, she was stumped. By chance, she mentioned the dilemma to Dorothy Wilhelm, host of "My Hometown" - a cable show that recently filmed at Orting - and the solution was clear: Donate the entire collection to the Soldiers Home for the residents to learn and enjoy.

(Any staff interested in learning the technique of cold casting sculpting and working with residents as they learn, should contact Activities Director, Lynn Zemke, at 893-4511 or E-mail her at LynnZ@DVA.WA.GOV.)

Olympics held at Orting

Residents and staff of the Soldiers Home became athletes-for-a-day as they participated in Olympic-patterned events and games held on campus Aug. 31. Recreational Rehabilitation, Occupational, Physical and Restorative Therapy staff members organized the event.

For this special event, a softball became a shot put, a Frisbee substituted for a discus and there was some fine shooting in the markmanship event.

Relay races were held in front of the nursing facility, with two walkers and two wheelchairs in each group. The multi-purpose room was converted to a polo/soccer field where the winning team achieved their award in "sudden death" overtime.

The staff hoop shoot was held on the patio and custodian Charles Wells had no difficulty sinking four consecutive baskets out of five shots.

Custodian Bob Horner and Social Work Director Sharon Rinehart won the egg toss.

The games encompassed various levels of participant ability and residents were encouraged to prepare and practice weeks ahead of the special day.

"Did I enjoy the Olympics? You bet I did," said discus medal winner Bob Boyd. "You could see that everyone was having a great time."

"The staff really went all out and I hope we can do this again."

Street Talk... with residents at the WA Soldiers Home

If you had it to do all over again, what branch of the service would you go into and why?



Kenneth Capley
USAF from 57-61

"I liked what I did and got to see a little bit of the world. The Air Force was a little bit more relaxed, so I'd go Air Force again."



Bob Hill
USAF from 50-54

"I joined the Army and they put me in the Air Force. The training was very good. I was a P51 pilot and in Korea we were just outflown. We'd blow up bridges and the next day they'd be back up. But, I'd go Air Force again."



Banard Alexander
USN from 43-46

"I was in 3 year, 3 months, 3 days and 10 minutes. I figured some damn fool would ask, so I remember it. I was a musician and played the coronet. Loved it. Would do it again."



Merle M. Fowler
USA from 39-45

"I would join the Canadian Air Force. I had two cousins who were in the Canadian Air Force and they were both killed. I considered them real heroes and felt bad I hadn't been able to do more myself."



Roy Goodart
USA 50-72

"I'd stay with the Army. There was always interesting things to do, places to go and it suited me."



New Associate Superintendent

Barbara Culley has joined the staff of the Washington Veterans Home at Retsil as Associate Superintendent effective Oct. 2, 2000.

Barbara’s interest in the health care profession began while growing up in Poulsbo, where as a teenager she volunteered at Martha & Mary Nursing Home. “It was during this time that I first noticed people try to hide and ignore the aging,” said Culley.

Being at the Veterans Home is a major step in her professional goal of learning all aspects involved in the continuum of the health care, industry-wide. Culley has been with Swedish Hospital in Patient

Registration, Group Health as a business manager and most recently with Premera Blue Cross as a Senior Project manager responsible for their Strategic Planning.

“I feel very honored to have the chance to try and make the experience of living at Retsil better for veterans,” said Culley. “I look forward to getting to know all of the residents and staff, and hope to be able to use my prior experiences to help make changes for the better.”



Home Sign Once Again Visible From Near and Far

The “Washington Veterans Home” beachstone sign on the hillside overlooking Sinclair Inlet recently received a long-overdue facelift. Thanks to a group of local volunteers from the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS), the USS Alaska, the Naval Intermediate Maintenance Facility, Pacific Northwest (IMF) and the Home Depot store in Silverdale, the sign is clearly visible for the first time since World War II.



The hillside stone sign as seen in 1920.

The project began in March, 1999 as a Wellness Action Team undertaking. Lead by co-chairs Liz Berens and Carmella

Platon, initial brush removal took place, and throughout the next seven months, a couple Saturdays a month were devoted to the monumental task. After the initial weekend, interest dwindled and other than Berens and Platon, the work parties consisted only of Berens’ dog, Lucy.

Luckily, the undertaking received a much-needed boost when the USS Alaska Engineering Overhaul Project Team decided to make the retrieval and restoration of this historic landmark a community relations project.

In Nov. 1999, employees from PSNS, IMF and members of the Alaska crew, all met on the hillside and cleared away the brush covering the sign that had been purposely buried by military officials during World War II. Then on Sept. 13 of this year, they met again to continue the team building exercise and produced a new and improved landmark that proudly announces where the Washington Veterans Home is located.

“This has allowed people to get away from their desks for a darn worthwhile cause,” said MMCM Edgar Bork, IMF’s Deputy Availability Manager. “It has been a really hard job that was goal oriented, demanded

team leadership and required working together to solve problems.”

With a first-of-its-kind missile upgrade of the USS Alaska — a Trident submarine — civilians and Navy personnel are working side-by-side and learning the value of combining resources and talents to accomplish a common goal. Like all businesses, the US Navy has not been shielded from the reality that budgets have been stretched to the limit, and projects like this one have helped them prepare for the 18-month backfit of the USS Alaska.

With the exception of some initial clearing, all the work was done without the benefit of electric- or gas-powered equipment. “The reason there were no power tools being used is because you can’t talk to your teammate to get acquainted, or figure out the solution to a problem, if you can’t hear them,” said Borg.

Home Depot of Silverdale provided all the materials needed for the project, and even brought along a number of store employees eager to volunteer for the cause. After being approached by Navy team leaders, Assistant Manager Craig Monson convinced his store manager this would be a worthwhile endeavor. He then asked for volunteers from the store’s employees and close to a dozen showed up to lend a hand and had the opportunity to get to know the other members of the team.

Home superintendent Bob Jones visited briefly with many of the workers during the afternoon. “We are very grateful to all the team members who worked so hard to restore a very significant and historic landmark,” said Jones. “It just shows what can be done when everyone works together for a common goal.”

“Our residents here at Retsil can be very proud that this extraordinary group of young men and women chose such a visible way to show their respect for these veterans.”



Employees from PSNS, IMF and members of the USS Alaska assisted with the restoration of the stone sign.



More WVH news on page 12

Retsil Is Connected

The world of fiber optics, satellites and telemedicine are no longer just a dream of the future, at least not at the Veterans Home. Three projects, all designed to help staff and residents become more connected to each other and outside resources, are being introduced to the staff and residents.

The first to be launched is The Long Term Care Network, a satellite-based educational service which delivers 24-hour-a-day training for all health care providers and administrators. The satellite is fully operational and is already providing an opportunity for staff to earn continuing education credits needed for their jobs. The network provides broadcasts that can be viewed live, or taped for viewing at a later date. Training coordinator Ed Dolle says they are building a library of the broadcast material as a resource for staff, and are exploring ways to make the library as accessible as possible for all employees.

“In the future,” said Dolle, “we will even be able to provide staff, or families of staff, an opportunity to begin a self-paced preparation program to take the GED exam.”

Next on the technology upgrade is a new fiber optic cable being installed throughout the facility.

“When fully operational, this cable will provide us the ability to broadcast directly to every TV at the Home,” said Bob Jones, WVH Superintendent. “We will have the means to provide residents and staff with schedules, menus, training, meetings - both live and recorded - on what will essentially be our own cable station.”

And finally, a telemedicine system being funded through a Federal VA grant will allow the Home to have live TV images and sound sent to doctors and health care providers at the VA, via the Internet. After local staff does an initial assessment, a teleconference will be scheduled. Thanks to cameras installed in the clinic and physical therapy facilities, Health Care professionals from the VA will be able to watch and listen as residents are evaluated. Home staff can then speak with the VA staff and set up a treatment plan for the resident, right then and there.

“And all this will be accomplished without the resident having to leave home,” said Jones. “In addition, our medical records staff will be able to review health record entries and completed consultations at the Seattle VA, as well as allowing our pharmacy staff interface with the federal formulary and resident drug regimes.”

What will they think of next?

Letters to the Editor



Statesman-Examiner - Colville, WA - Nov 8

To all the citizens of Colville who participated in the 3rd Annual Veteran’s Stand Down on Sept. 22-24:

Thank you.

On behalf of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, I am honored to live in a state where citizens care as much about our veterans as your community does. Your compassion and generosity during the recent Veteran’s Stand Down are proof that people do care about the well-being of our veterans.

A community in action can accomplish so much to help those in need. It would have been easy for the community to quit when a fire destroyed the event’s stored supplies with less than two weeks to go. What an amazing accomplishment to be able to rally and pull together everything needed to provide a successful Stand Down. And to top it all, you provided service to 1000 more this year than last year!

You helped over 2,500 veterans — veterans who needed a helping hand.

Thanks to the wonderful people of Colville, they also received acknowledgement that their service to our country was appreciated and people do care.

You should all be very proud of the wonderful example you have shown to the young people in your community. With role models like you, our veterans will know they served to secure the liberty and freedom of a very grateful nation.

*John M. King
Director*

The Bremerton Sun - August

Thanks for care

During the past 18 months, my brother, Olaf Moen, was a resident at Retsil Veterans’ Home. Recently, he had become bedridden and required 24-hour care. He passed away Aug. 2. He was buried at Retsil Cemetery with full military honors, including a 21-gun salute.

The care my brother received during the time he was at Retsil was exceptional. The nursing staff and the nurses’ aides on the first floor of Building Nine are to be commended for their loving care and gracious attitude. Their help and kindness is very much appreciated.

Henry Moen - Bremerton

The Daily Olympian - Nov 15

Veterans Ceremony was a heartwarming experience

The spirit of patriotism is alive and well at Jefferson Middle School!

On Nov.9, we were among the fortunate audience at the Veterans Day program presented by students and music faculty. The concert band, chorus and soloists, and their musical renditions were — quite simply — outstanding.

Student-authored readings about the meaning of patriotism, remembrance and respect were sensitively presented. The touching experience created a constricted throat, or tears among even the most callused, of at least one World War II vet.

We felt proud of the people responsible — student and faculty alike — and sided that many more veterans had attended this heartwarming presentation. The school is certainly deserving of commendations.

Jim and Betty Blue, Olympia



Tacoma's Living War Memorial dedicated in 1952.

Living War Memorial Park on the Move

Tacoma's Living War Memorial Park, situated right in the middle of the proposed second Narrows bridge, is on track for a new home.

A public meeting was held on Nov. 15, to unveil plans for relocating the War Memorial to a new park. Referred to as the Olympic Gateway in site selection proposals, the park – located where Sixth Avenue once connected to the bridge – is highly visible from both SR-16 and Jackson Ave and close to the existing Living War Memorial Park.

The meeting resulted in the Living War Memorial's ad hoc committee voting to present the proposed new park plans to the City of Tacoma for approval.

The committee, formed to assist in achieving the best possible design solution for the soon-to-be-displaced Living War Memorial Park, included people representing a wide variety of interests in the project, including veterans.

Sal Cantu, a member of AMVETS, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans, has been serving on

the committee and representing the veterans in the area.

"The proposed new site will actually have better visibility than the current location," said Cantu.

An important part of Pierce County history, the Living War Memorial Park was dedicated on Nov. 11, 1952, by civic groups, fraternal organizations, service clubs and military troops. The proposed relocation plan calls for moving a 20-foot-long curved stone monument, a 6-foot-square sandstone plaque and a 1903 bell from the ship Tacoma.

For information concerning the Living War Memorial Park, contact Sal Cantu (253) 593-7361.

VAAC Helps Auburn Veterans pay for Memorial – More Money Needed, However

The Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee donated \$2,000 to the Auburn Veterans Committee, not only to pay for the damage caused to the memorial by vandals, but to help pay off a \$45,000 loan local veterans took out for the project.

After a three-year fund raising campaign, the memorial was dedicated on July 4, 2000 in front of 400 people at a City Park ceremony. Most of the money for the memorial was raised from more than 150 private donors, the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe and several businesses.

"Everyone was telling us the memorial was really needed, a good deal for the community and what the community wanted," local veteran Skee Goforth said. "There was so much enthusiasm among the people we talked to. They said go ahead and start, we would have no trouble getting the money.

"We honestly thought we could raise the rest."

Goforth said he and the five other veterans knew borrowing the balance, as a personal loan from a local individual, would be risky. Also, some people were beginning to question their commitment to the project, so they went ahead.

But hoped-for contributions from local corporations never came through.

With the January deadline for paying the loan fast approaching, the flow of donations has stopped.

"If we can't raise the money to pay back the loan, each man would have to kick in about \$8,000 of his own money," Goforth said, "which will be especially tough for the four who are retired." And leaving the loan unpaid is out of the question, he said.

"We didn't want any kind of stigma attached to the Memorial."

The Auburn Veterans Committee is taking donations and still selling engraved memorial bricks.

How to help

Donations can be sent to:
The Auburn Veterans Committee
PO Box L
Auburn, WA 98071



VAAC member Chuck Karczewski presents a \$2,000 donation to Mayor Chuck Booth for the Auburn Memorial project.

Waitsburg Memorial

Waitsburg, Wash., dedicated its Veterans Memorial during a special ceremony Memorial Day, May 29, 2000. Beneath a flag, which days earlier had flown over the U.S. Capitol, veterans, families, friends and supporters of the Veterans Memorial Wall gathered to dedicate the monument of Waitsburg's servicemen and servicewomen and to recognize Memorial Day, 2000.

The wall – completed at a cost of \$14,000 – carries the names of 292 veterans who served from the Mexican War of 1846 through Vietnam. Eventually, it will list those who served in conflicts such as Grenada and the Persian Gulf, as well as peacetime veterans buried in Waitsburg's two cemeteries.

The light-gray granite memorial is 17 feet long, five feet high and six inches thick. In front of the base are stones bearing the seals of the five branches of service: Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard.

The American Legion Auxiliary Unit #35 originally proposed the monument idea. The dedication capped a year of planning, fund raising and hard work by a group of faithful volunteers from the local American Legion Post #35, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post #7021 and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit #35.



Commentary

WV students do honor to veterans, themselves

The Front Porch: Barry Rickards has pride and admiration in the way these high schoolers observed Veterans Day.

Barry Rickards - Special to the Valley Voice

Spokane__I will never again think or say those words about our Valley youth after attending the Veterans Day observance last week at West Valley High School.

This was a sincere and moving ceremony that recognized and gave thanks to all veterans and particularly to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country.

This year’s program was dedicated to the 17 young men and women who lost their lives in the recent bombing of the USS Cole in South Yemen.

What struck me most deeply were the attentiveness, the visible respect and the response of the 600 or so students seated in the West Valley gym bleachers.

They listened hard as school staff, veterans, student representatives and members of our nation’s defense forces spoke of their feelings about Veterans Day, our flag, fallen comrades and what it meant to them to be granted their freedoms through the sacrifice of others.

Steve Warren, an English teacher at West Valley and a Vietnam War veteran, spoke of our flag and what it meant to him and to his comrades, some of whom never came home.

Woodworking students constructed a wall of remembrance in honor of the fallen from the USS Cole bombing, and Kayla Anderson of the West Valley ASB leadership spoke in honor of this memorial.

My daughter spoke about my father, who did not serve in the United States forces but fought alongside them as an ally in World War II. He was a British Royal Air Force bomber pilot who flew Lancaster bombers into Germany on night bombing missions while his allies in the U.S. 8th

Army Air Force flew B-17 Flying Fortresses into the same areas during daylight hours.

My father was shot down over Denmark on his 17th mission and crash-landed in a farmer’s field. The crash impact killed one of his six crew members, the rear gunner. The surviving crew got out and a few hundred yards from the wreck when it exploded and burned in a fireball.

They were all captured and spent the next three years in a prisoner-of-war camp on the German/Polish border.

In the late winter of 1945, my father and 1,500 allied airmen were force-marched from Poland to the west, across Germany, as their prison guards desperately wanted to avoid being captured by the advancing Russian army.

About 700 of these airmen managed to walk the 300 miles across Germany, surviving on less than a half loaf of bread and pork fat or a potato given to them daily.

Forty days after leaving Poland, the German prison guards abandoned their prisoners and my father was one of those who walked into Gen. Patton’s advancing 3rd Army. He always remembered his first hot meal of American oatmeal!

When my father started his flight training in Africa, as a 21-year-old volunteer, he weighed 185 pounds. When he reached England two days after being rescued by the U.S. 3rd Army, he weighed just 97 pounds.

He lived a full life and died peacefully just three weeks ago, leaving behind five grandchildren.

Three of his grandchildren — my daughters — are or have been students at

West Valley High School.

The losses suffered by both the U.S. and British air forces in World War II were horrendous. Of every 100 men who flew in these bombers, 57 died in action, three died in crashes, three were seriously injured, 13 were captured and held as prisoners of war. Of that 100, only 24 survived the war unharmed.

Most of these men were in their early 20s — not much older than those West Valley High School students participating in last week’s Veterans Day tribute.

This group of students obviously regards this day as very important. Several times they rose to give standing ovations to speakers or video presentations. Veterans and active military personnel were visibly moved, as was I.

Sometimes we forget.

West Valley High School’s staff and students helped me to remember and be thankful for those who fought, and those still serving, to give us what we have today.

They make me proud to be a new American — I became a citizen in 1998 — and to have children who value this country.

(Barry Rickards was born in England and raised in Central Africa. A chemical engineer for Kaiser Aluminum, he has lived and worked in Zimbabwe, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Europe. Today he lives in the Spokane Valley and is a member of the Valley Voice Council of Contributors.)

(Source: Spokesman Review - Nov. 16, 2000)



TOLLING of the BOATS



A Tolling of the Boats ceremony was held at Retsil on Oct. 13, 2000 by the Officers and crew of USS Alabama SSBN-731. The ceremony was in recognition of the submarine centennial and those submariners lost at sea during the month of October. Seven boats were represented:

- USS S-44 (SS-155) lost 41 men on Oct. 7, 1943
- USS WAHOO (SS-238) All hands on or about Oct. 11, 1943
- USS DORADO (SS-248) All hands on or about Oct. 12, 1943
- USS SEA WOLF (SS-197) All hands on or about Oct. 3, 1944
- USS ESCOLAR (SS-238) All hands on or about Oct. 17, 1944
- USS SHARKII (SS-314) All hands on or about Oct. 24, 1944
- USS TANK (SS-306) 55 men on Oct. 24, 1944

Each submarine’s loss had a story told, a candle lighting and a bell tolled. As the bell tolled the candle was blown out.

3,617 Submariners paid the ultimate sacrifice that we may enjoy our freedom. We have lost whole submarines and their entire crews. We have lost individual shipmates, friends and relatives. It’s good that we remember them. It makes us more aware of the bond that we have; dangers we faced; the dangers our shipmates continue to face, and the sacrifice we have not yet been called on to make.

Psychological Riddle: What do Jim Carrey, Charles Dickens, Fall and Winter and Holiday Family Gatherings have in Common?

By Tom Schumacher, PTSD Program Manager

OK, Jim Carrey plays the Dr. Seuss character, *The Grinch*, in a newly released film. Charles Dickens was the creator of the scurrilous character Ebonesier Scrooge, who seemed to take on all of the negative energy in the known universe to resist the tidings of joy during the holidays.

The link between these two vexing literary characters – which seems to have Christmas as the focal point – is the presence of childhood trauma. The Grinch, who reportedly stole Christmas, suffered a very negative childhood history. We also know Dickens’ character, Scrooge, suffered at the hands of his very stern uncle and became a bitter man. Both the Grinch and Scrooge hated the holidays with such passion, they went dramatically out of their way to make angry, bitter statements about the season of love and celebration.

But wait! Is this *Ho Hum* and *Bah Humbug* attitude really as unusual and out of the ordinary as these two characters are cast to represent? Don’t we all have at least some dread of the hardships of the season? And, are there not other forces pulling and tugging at our naturally happy souls – whispering in our ears perhaps, that the crowds, the relatives, the travel, the money, the food, the alcohol, etc. are all out there scheming to take us places off the path of our true desire?

SAD

So what do fall and winter have to do with this riddle?

It has become a well-disseminated finding that many people seem to be powerfully affected by the changing seasons. In fact, Washington state residents are some of the nation’s experts in Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). We are seven times more likely to suffer from fall/winter depression than are residents of Florida, for example. This special form of depression follows the seasons with an onset of symptoms in late fall, followed by gradual relief in the spring.

Symptoms of SAD include:

- ◆ Changes in appetite
- ◆ Craving for sweet or starchy foods
- ◆ Weight gain
- ◆ Feelings of heaviness in the legs and arms
- ◆ A drop in energy level
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Lowered productivity
- ◆ A tendency to oversleep
- ◆ Problems with concentration, irritability and increased sensitivity to social rejection
- ◆ Avoidance of social situations.

Commonly, there is also a sense of guilt, loss of interest in joyful activities, a sense of hopelessness, helplessness and doom. Fortunately, as summer approaches, these symptoms begin to abate.

Help for the Holidays

There is hope for surviving the holidays. And the answer may be in trying not to make the holidays anything more than some winter days that will give you time to relax, build traditions, and enjoy – not *direct* – the outcome.

Personally, I’ve made watching Charles Dickens’, *A*

Christmas Carol, a must-do each year, because it helps me gain perspective on the whole meaning of the holidays. Establishing other traditions that are new and unique – yet not too taxing – allow expressions that give me meaning. I believe culture should guide, but not drag, us through the experience of holidays.

If you suffer from SAD, there is help. Many people respond to Light Therapy, where the sufferer is exposed to timed doses of *full spectrum light* – light that replicates the sun’s light, making-up for the shorter, daytime dose of winter sunlight. Sometimes SAD, and other depressions, are best treated through psychotherapy and antidepressant medications. This has helped millions, and we now know depression is the most successfully treated mental health concern.

I have pulled together some ideas that suggest how to make it through the holidays, the family gatherings and the pressure to be the culturally perfect holiday celebrant. Some of these may help you – even if you are only mildly stressed by the holidays – find personal meaning and even joy in the weeks to come.

Other Resources

There are many places to look for ideas on managing ones’ feelings and reactions to the holidays. The Internet offers websites and topical links. If you want help looking for information regarding any of the topics discussed here, please do not hesitate to call me at 360-725-2189.

Happy Holidays

Help for the Holidays

- ◆ Unless your name is Martha Stewart, be realistic and set limits on time and energy spent.
- ◆ Use your sense of humor rather than seeing the season as a serious time.
- ◆ Intentionally be more quiet, slow and deliberate.
- ◆ Do less and not more. It’s fine to turn off the shopping hype.
- ◆ Do not take on the old roles in your family – peacekeeper, coordinator, food service manager, master of ceremonies, recreation director, etc., unless you really want to.
- ◆ Temper your expectations of what the holidays are all about. Learn the deeper meanings of these days.
- ◆ Create your own rituals and cultural practices. (I like hiding a pickle in the Christmas tree for others to find. They redeem the pickle for something like a meal item they really like.)
- ◆ Schedule activities over several days with breaks for R&R.
- ◆ Do not let go of the other routine parts of your life.
- ◆ Set limits on your expenditures. Concentrate on people and their lives, rather than on things.
- ◆ Eat regular meals and if you drink, remember alcohol is a depressant.
- ◆ Be with people you love and who can show love back to you.
- ◆ Have periods of time in the day when only whispers are heard. Revere your own need for sanctuary.
- ◆ Remember children are not going to be happy and respectful all of the time and their excitement can be noisy.
- ◆ Go for walks or do other physical activities.
- ◆ Take breaks, soak in the tub or other things that represent special treats just for you.
- ◆ Set limits on gift buying and giving. Why wreck your budget for one day of the year?
- ◆ Surround yourself with people who are healthy emotionally. Take those who are not in small doses.
- ◆ Even if tempted, avoid talking about politics with relatives who may disagree with you.
- ◆ Be assertive, but avoid being aggressive or ticked-off about things. If you feel yourself becoming angry, find something to do to around the house or take a break/walk, etc.
- ◆ Allow older people to tell stories of holidays long ago
- ◆ Do a kind thing for someone you don’t know. It will warm your heart throughout the season.



Veteran Voices

Veteran Voices is published for veteran advocates like Jimmy Grissom, VVA, President of the Washington State Council. Jimmy was recently honored as Outstanding Volunteer Service Officer.



Veterans have a place to call Home...

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| ★ Physical Therapy | ★ Convenience Store |
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| ★ Medical Transportation | ★ Religious Programs |
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The Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs operates two beautiful Homes in Western Washington: The Soldiers Home and Colony in Orting, located in the Puyallup Valley; and the Washington Veterans Home in Retsil, near Port Orchard overlooking Puget Sound. Both homes provide high-quality care for honorably discharged veterans.

To be eligible for admission to the Homes, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- ★ A veteran discharged under honorable conditions;
- ★ Washington state resident; and
- ★ Meet certain financial guidelines

For an application or more information, call the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs Centralized Admissions at:
1-877-VETS-R-US (1-877-838-7787)



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